

ZAMI Atlanta's Premiere Organization for Lesbians of African Descent

"Acknowledged, our dreams can shape the realities of our future, if we arm them with the hard work and scrutiny of now." Audre Lorde

December, 2002

Dear Friend of The Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund,

On September 28, 2002, The Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund awarded eleven \$1000 scholarships to a group of exemplary women and one man. Since 1997, we have celebrated the achievements of these remarkable students by awarding thirty-three \$1000 scholarships. We are proud to report that these scholars have a 100% graduation rate. As you know, this year the Fund went national and is the only scholarship fund that specifically targets outstanding African-American (out) lesbians and gay men who attend any accredited post secondary institution in the United States.

We are thriving, surviving and staying strong because of your sustenance and generosity

Please meet our 2002 Scholars:

Donna C. Owens is a graduate student concentrating in Expressive Therapy at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Owens helped to create and implement Connecticut's first sexual minority youth project.

Charles Stephens attends Georgia State University in Atlanta where he is studying Women's Studies. Stephens proclaims, " I am a walking paradox. A young black man that is pro-feminist, a black person that is also gay, a young person that still believes."

Melissa Crosby attends Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan: the first college in the United States by charter to admit minorities and women. In 2002, during her sophomore year, Crosby became a Co-founder and President of Common Cause, Olivet's first l/g/b/t, and straight alliance.

Abigail Sewell identifies as artist, activist and leader. Sewell is in her second year at the University of Florida where she is majoring in Materials Science and Engineering and hopes to squeeze in a second degree in English during her four-year tenure.

Leslie Johnson, a native of Chicago, Illinois, attends Stanford University. She is President of Black and Queer at Stanford (BlaQS), the Rainbow Christian Fellowship, the LGBT Speakers Bureau, plays on the Women's Rugby Team, and sings in Stanford's Symphonic Chorus.

Melissa Gordon is a junior at Tennessee State University majoring in Social Work. Gordon began her organizing and activism in high school when she attempted to start a lesbian student union. In 2001, she founded Project Shine which is a mentoring program designed to instill pride in and create opportunities for black girls.

Jonathan A. Jones has been on the battlefield for many years fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse in her community. Jones has received educational and organizational training from several state and national agencies on issues such as HIV/ AIDS and Chemical Dependency. Jones is at the University of Arkansas working toward her goal of becoming a Registered Nurse.

ZAMI's primary mission is to empower and affirm the lives of lesbians of African descent through providing scholarship funds, leadership development, support/discussion groups, social activities, outreach and education.

Simone Bell is a graduating senior at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia where she is an English major. Bell who is a writer and poet believes that as a black, lesbian, womyn, it is her responsibility to allow her light to shine in the middle of darkness as a beacon for those who are lost.

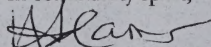
According to Beatrice Sullivan, "Only until I realized my identity as a queer woman of color writer/poet activist, did I become truly comfortable with myself." As a 16-year-old junior in high school, Sullivan was one of two teens invited to speak at the first National Black Lesbian Conference. She entered Oberlin College last fall where she is an English and Writing major.

Taquelia Washington is pursuing an advanced degree in Social Work at San Jose State. Washington has spent most of her time in recent years helping others by serving as a counselor in the House, a student-operated service at UC-Davis that provides safe and confidential counseling to students experiencing emotional distress.

Alicia Skillman is a resident of Detroit, Michigan and is studying Physics at Oakland University in her quest to become a Patent Attorney. Skillman founded Family Reunion: PFLAG Detroit for People of Color. She also serves as vice chair of the Triangle Foundation, which is Michigan's largest gay rights advocacy group.

Your on-going support of ZAMI signals your willingness to do **"the hard work and scrutiny of now"** so necessary for us to transform our futures. On behalf of our board and 2002 Audre Lorde Scholars, we want to thank you for your past contributions and hope that you will consider giving the gift of education this holiday season. We know that you gave generously last year. Please consider increasing your contribution.

In community spirit,



Mary Anne Adams,

Executive Director

The Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund is named in honor of Audre Lorde, former State Poet of New York who defined herself as a black lesbian, warrior poet. Lorde is internationally regarded as a significant contributor to the struggle for women's liberation and lesbian and gay rights. Lorde's voice was stilled in 1992, when she died of cancer at the age of 58.

ZAMI is a sponsored project of the Fund for Southern Communities (FSC). Tax-deductible contributions should be made payable to FSC and designated for the Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund.

We have enclosed an envelope for giving.

ZAMI: A Carriacou word for women who work together as friends and lovers...

documentary by filmmaker Yvonne Welbon: *Living With Pride: Ruth C. Ellis @ 100*. Ellis resided in D. Michigan until her death in 2000 and was highly respected as one of the oldest known "out" African-American lesbians.

Wendy Belkin, who funds the Ruth C. Ellis Award was so empowered by Ellis' life story that she and pled five-year

commitment to funding Ellis' award. She is an Ohio native and amateur astronomer who lives in Decatur, GA and for over 15 years has operated her own business as a Tax Attorney and CPA.

The Joan P. Garner Award: Garner is the first Executive Director of the Atlanta-based Southern Partner Fund, whose mission is to fund and build the capacity of community-based organizations and is committed to advancing social, economic and environmental justice across an 11-state region in rural south. Garner, a native of Washington, D.C., has a long history of involvement in social capital philanthropy and is one of the authors of *"Robin Hood Was Right: A Guide to Giving Your Money for Change"*.

The Sha' Mendon Award: Mendon, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, TN received a degree in Business Administration from Austin Peay University with a focus on marketing. She currently serves as COO chief operating officer for an Atlanta IT firm. Mendon is the founder of Kings Crossing Publishing and recently published *"Body Language"* by C.C. Carter and *"Resurrection: A Collection of Work"* by Robin G. White. Mendon is committed to developing a well informed next generation of writers, by supporting new and young writers through education about the writing and publishing industry. Mendon is a board member of the Zuna Institute: A National Black Lesbian Advocacy Organization.

The Sherry Turner Award: Dr. Sherry Turner is a developmental psychologist whose research and teaching focus on the socialization of African-American women and girls. As an activist, Dr. Turner is committed to fighting against racism, sexism, homophobia, and all forms of oppression. As an artist, she depicts positive images of African-American women and girls and explores themes of self-acceptance, community, and spirituality. As an administrator, she is committed to ensuring that institutions of higher education are just as equitable environments for all. A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. Turner currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Tony Daniels Community Ally Award: Anthony C. Daniels (1965 – 1998), was one of Atlanta's most powerful organizers and activists. Daniels was a founder of In The Life Atlanta, Inc., of ADODI Muse, Inc., of the Black Lesbian & Gay Poets Society. A long-time AIDS survivor, he was a vocal and passionate advocate for the rights and freedom of people living with HIV, poor people, women, and people of color across a broad spectrum. This scholarship is funded by ADODI Muse, Inc.; A Gay Negro Ensemble, the black, gay, male performance poets' collective. Muse members, Duncan E. Teague, Malik M.L. Williams and Anthony Antoin specifically recognize Daniels' work to build bridges across diverse communities.

(2002 Audre Lorde Scholars)

Melissa Gordon, the recipient of **The Mary Anne Adams Award**, is a junior at Tennessee State University majoring in Social Work. Gordon began her organizing and activism in high school when she attempted to start a lesbian student union. In 2001, she founded Project Shine, which is a mentoring program designed to instill pride in and create opportunities for black girls. Recently, Gordon founded the Community Leadership Summit, developed to train area youth from six different high schools in goal setting, project planning, community awareness, and personal leadership assessment. Gordon is a poet and volunteers as a poetry

Billy

assistant in a women's prison. She has finished her first book of poetry entitled, *Brown Girl Blues*.

Simone Bell, the recipient of **The Kelley D. Alexander Award**, is a graduating senior at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia where she serves as a mentor to ADORE, (Affirmed Daughters of Ruth Ellis), an African-American lesbian/-bisexual questioning organization. As an English major, Bell's future goal is to receive a graduate degree in Creative Writing. Bell who is a writer and poet believes that as a black, lesbian, womyn, it is her responsibility to allow her light to shine in the middle of darkness as a beacon for those who are lost. She lives in Atlanta with her partner of 13thirteen years.

Lily

Jonathan A. Jones, the recipient of **The Edith E. Biggers Award**, has been on the battlefield for many years fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse in her community. Jones has received educational and organizational training from several state and national agencies on issues such as HIV/AIDS and Chemical Dependency. She has devoted her time and energy serving as outreach coordinator for Brotha's and Sista's, a Black lesbian/-gay/-bisexual and transgender organization committed to providing outreach and education on safe-sex issues and HIV prevention. After working for many years as a Patient Care Technician, Jones recently resolved that she would enter the University of Arkansas in 2002 to work toward her goal of becoming a Registered Nurse. Jones resides in Little Rock, Arkansas with her 13thirteen-year-old daughter.

Kalid

Leslie Johnson, the recipient of **The Sheryl Burke Award**, left her hometown of Chicago, Illinois to enter Stanford University as a freshman in the fall of 2000. Quickly, Johnson found herself mired in many communities. Through courage and determination, she found her way. While holding a position as Financial Chair of Black and Queer at Stanford (BlaQS), attending the Rainbow Christian Fellowship, and serving on the LGBT Speakers Bureau, Johnson lived in the black theme dorm, Ujamaa, and was a member of the Black Student Union while juggling a full academic load, a position on the Women's Rugby Team, and a slot in Stanford's Symphonic Chorus. A Product Design major, Johnson is spending the fall semester of, 2002 in Italy studying Italian.

Abigail Sewell, the recipient of **The Sheryl Burke Award**, identifies as Artist, Activist and Leader. Sewell is entering her second year at the University of Florida where she is majoring in Materials Science and Engineering and hoping to squeeze in a second degree in English during her four-year tenures there. She serves as Director of Women Affairs for the Pride Student Union and produced a major show last year entitled "Exodus Into the Erotic". Sewell has also been appointed to the planning committee for Pride Awareness Month 2003. She is the 2002 Ladyfest South Slam Champion and placed 2nd at the Windy City LGBT Poetry Slam in July 2002. Sewell just finished production of her first chapbook, *Southern Girl Crying*.

Curtis

Taquelia Washington, the recipient of **The Cherie Caldwell Award**, is pursuing an advanced degree in Social Work at San Jose State. Washington has spent most of her time in recent years helping others by serving as a counselor in the House, a student-operated service at UC-Davis that provides safe and confidential counseling to students experiencing emotional distress, as well as providing counseling at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center.

Felicia

Alicia Skillman, the recipient of **The Ruth C. Ellis Award**, is a resident of Detroit, Michigan and is studying Physics at Oakland University in her quest to become a Patent Attorney. Skillman is currently working as an Associate Attorney assisting in patent prosecution and litigation. Very active in her community, Skillman founded Family Reunion: PFLAG Detroit for People of Color in 2001. She also serves as Vice Chair of the Triangle Foundation, which is Michigan's largest gay rights advocacy group and volunteers with S.P.I.C.E. (Sistahs Providing Intelligence, Creativity & Empowerment), a discussion and social group.

Richard

Melissa Crosby, the recipient of **The Joan Garner Award**, attends Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan: the first college in the United States by charter to admit minorities and women. In 2002, during her sophomore year, Crosby became a Co-founder and President of Common Cause, Olivet's first lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight alliance. During the last school year, under her leadership, Common Cause organized over 30 events at this rural college of 850 students. As a result, she was honored by her college with a Diversity Award, along with the most prestigious annual award, The Olivet Cup, for outstanding leadership in individual and social responsibility. An Economic Development major, Crosby also serves as Vice President of Finance & Administration for the Student Alliance Council.

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According to **Beatrice Sullivan**, the recipient of **The Sha' Mendon Award**, "Only until I realized my identity as a queer woman of color writer/poet activist, did I become truly comfortable with myself." For all four years of high school, Sullivan worked with Youth Communication (YC), an organization geared towards the self-empowerment of young people. She was also a member of a high school Women Writer's Group and worked at Atlanta's only feminist women's bookstore. As a 16-year-old junior in high school, Sullivan was one of two teens invited to speak at the first National Black Lesbian Conference in 2001. She entered Oberlin this fall where she will major in English and Writing.

LaTonya

Donna C. Owens, the recipient of **The Sherry Turner Award**, is a graduate student concentrating in Expressive Therapy at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A passionate activist and organizer, Owens helped to create and implement Connecticut's first sexual minority youth project—a program specifically designed to develop leadership and organizing skills in young lesbians, bisexual women and gay men of color. As a research educator at The Institute of Community Research, she co-authored the Urban Women Against Substance Abuse Program (UWASA) curriculum, which has been disseminated nationally. As a member of the Urban Artists Initiative, a national demonstration program for emerging urban artists, Owens currently performs with other artists and musicians on a regular basis.

Jaynell

Charles Stephens, the recipient of **The Tony Daniels Community Ally Award**, who attends Georgia State University in Atlanta where he is studying Women's Studies. Stephens proclaims, "I am a walking paradox. A young black man that is pro-feminist, a black person that is also gay, a young person that still believes." Stephens is a founding member of The Black Rainbow, a discussion group for young Black queer men. He also serves on the Board of Directors and is Vice-Chair of the finance committee of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), a national queer organization that supports the efforts of grassroots queer youth organizations. Active in campus affairs, Stephens is Chair of the Public Relations Committee of the Student Judicial Board and is Arts and Entertainment writer for the school newspaper.

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(2002 Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund Named Awards)

The Mary Anne Adams Award: Adams serves as ZAMI's Executive Director and is the founder of the Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund. In 1999, she founded Sister Outsider, a multi-cultured Atlanta-based organization, with a focus on lesbians and aging issues. Adams is also the founder and moderator of Sister Outsider II, an Internet list serve for black lesbians. In 2000, Adams founded Madam Productions as a way to foster community through musical and literary expression. This year, Adams founded Drum Sista, a drumming circle for lesbians of color. A native of Oxford, Mississippi, she recently received a graduate degree in social work and has spent the last two years working on progressive grass-roots issues such as predatory lending and the living wage campaign. Adams makes her home in Decatur, Georgia.

The Kelley D. Alexander Award: A native of Beloit, Wisconsin, Alexander studied English Literature and Philosophy at Beloit College. She is the founder and publisher of InnerLight Publishing, whose mission is to take on sublime projects that move, encourage, and inspire by way of a unique ability to bring inner-visions into physical form. The company publishes works by both emerging and previously published authors and last year published a collection of essays by author Carol Gee entitled "*The Venus Chronicles*." Recently, Alexander, teamed with poet Nikky Finney to publish her third collection of poetry entitled, *The World is Round*, to be published in January 2003. Alexander also works as a Senior Manager for a telecommunications firm and makes her living in management for a telecommunications firm and lives in Decatur, Georgia.

The Edith E. Biggers Award: Dr. Biggers is a public health physician who delivers compassionate and state-of-the-art medical care to indigent, uninsured, underserved, and substance using HIV positive patients, with an emphasis on maximizing self-empowerment through education. Since 1993, she has been a frequent voice on the speaker's circuit encouraging patients to develop strategies for taking charge of their lives, for increasing adherence with antiretroviral therapies, for negotiating with partners and for disclosing HIV status. Dr. Biggers, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, received her medical degree from Emory University, her masters in Library Science from Atlanta University and her Bachelor's in Music from Smith College. In her spare time, Biggers practices karate and takes color photographs of big city skylines.

The Sheryl Burke Award: Burke is a Personal Injury Attorney who operates her own law practices based Georgia and California. Burke, a native of Los Angeles, California is a graduate of St. Louis University School and is a member of the National and Georgia Trial Lawyers' Association. Burke makes her home in Atlanta and is involved in supporting many local organizations including camps, scholarship funds, church and educational groups.

The Cherie Caldwell Award: Caldwell is an expert in the supervision and management of employee relations training and development, with more than 15 years of human resource management experience. She served as the Director of Human Resources for Southern Company Energy Marketing L.P. and National Credit, Inc., as well as Senior Manager of human resources with Kraft Foods. Caldwell is currently employed as the Director of Human Resources for a flight attendant group of 19,000 employees. She is a member of the Atlanta Chapter of the Human Rights Campaign and currently serves on the Diversity sub-committee.

The Ruth C. Ellis Award: Ellis was born July 23, 1899 in Springfield, Illinois and is the subject of a one-hour

